

THE ADMINISTRATION:

His Master's Voice

There are times when President Lyndon B. Johnson's adamantine insistence on consensus begins to sound oddly like a demand for conformity. A case in point is the smoldering feud between the Voice of America and the makers of U.S. foreign policy from the White House on down.

The Voice, as it is called in Washington shorthand, has long taken pride in the fact that it does its best to project a balanced and accurate picture of the U.S. Under the late U.S. Information Agency chief Edward R. Murrow, Voice of America news broadcasts acquired a reputation for accuracy and balance that some commercial news agencies might envy. In Moscow, for instance, it is no secret that Soviet Foreign Office officials, loath to believe their own news agency, Tass, have relied heavily on VOA broadcasts for news from areas of vital U.S. involvement.

But now, under direct and restrictive orders from above, the news broadcasts carried by VOA present an almost unrelieved picture of U.S. righteousness in foreign affairs (though critical comments on domestic issues are still noted), and VOA officers and staffers fear that permanent damage may have been done to the credibility of the programs.

Alarm: This concern has been noted by U.S. officials abroad, too. Just last week, U.S. Ambassador to Moscow Foy Kohler cabled Washington to express his own alarm at the Voice's programs to Russia. Kohler cited a typical recent VOA broadcast on events in Santo Domingo and Vietnam. "In almost every case," he said, "news citings and comments seemed too obviously selected to bolster the official government position; correspondingly, there was a notable lack of hard news from either the Caribbean area or Southeast Asia—and this precisely when hard news was wanted by the Russians." "Kohler's telegram is no surprise to us," said a State Department official just back from Moscow. "We are getting like Radio Moscow, which never quotes unfavorable reaction to the Kremlin line."

The White House-VOA feud first came to light three months ago with the resignation of Voice chief Henry Loomis, who had been increasingly embittered



Associated Press

USIA chief Rowan: Ham-handed?

about the policy changes enforced on the agency by the White House. The censorship began when President Johnson learned that Voice broadcasts were including excerpts from columnists and editorials critical of policies in Vietnam. Loomis, who left the Voice to become Deputy U.S. Commissioner of Education, used the occasion of his departure to make a speech that Voice staffers are fond of quoting.

Under the Rug: "We must by our very stance communicate ... the fact that diversity is preferable to uniformity," said Loomis. "To sweep under the rug what we don't like, what does not serve our tactical purpose, is a sign of weakness. To acknowledge the existence of forces and views in disagreement with the policy makers, to take these specially into account in the formation of our output ... is good, persuasive propaganda. We must show that the United States gains strength—not weakness—from diversity ..."

This speech leaked out to some Washington newspapers, and also seeped under President Johnson's collar. USIA Chief Carl Rowan then took prompt action. Rowan sent his deputy, Burnett Anderson, whose tasks include editing the Voice's programs, down to read the riot act to the staff.

Anderson, one staffer recalls, was blunt and to the point. He said: "We know you have been feeding the press with stories about censorship. We shall continue our policy whether you like it or not. We're in a shooting war in Southeast Asia, and we have responsibility for the people whose lives are in danger."

Ever since, the Voice's broadcasts have been criticized as overly larded with a propaganda line inspired by the

White House. Some Voice scriptwriters have balked at this, demanding that their names be removed from texts too heavily edited. On other occasions, neither Anderson nor Rowan could find writers willing to produce what they wanted. This forced the two bosses to undertake the chores themselves.

Dismay: The results of this exercise produced further wails of dismay. One VOA veteran said: "Anderson recently produced a script on Latin American reaction to U.S. policies in the Dominican Republic which sounded as though we had landed sacks of gold instead of U.S. marines there." USIA chief Rowan proved equally ham-handed: in one script he described the Dominican Communists as "international jackals," an echo of the kind of epithets that Tito and Stalin used to exchange with such fervor in the late 1940s.

Rowan himself vehemently denies that the White House is directing the censorship. "I do not think," he says, "that the Voice of America should be ruled by some vague intellectual notion of 'impartiality.' I think that its news programs should be honest, and they are. But I insist that those people at the Voice realize that its fundamental purpose is the same as the rest of the USIA—to further the foreign-policy objectives of the U.S. Government."

A broad, such censorship of the Voice is a cause of increasing embarrassment almost everywhere. United States diplomats point out that the current VOA broadcasts sound doubly silly since most nations where they may be heard also receive the BBC and other Western news reports—and these regularly include the same policy criticisms that the White House has ordered censored

from the U.S. Government's broadcasts.

Morale at VOA headquarters in Washington is sagging—and getting worse. Rowan is having a hard time finding a replacement for Loomis.

"Even if these policies relax with the improvement of the situations in the Dominican Republic and Vietnam," says one VOA official, "it will take us a long time to regain our credibility. A radio medium is a sensitive instrument—once it's misused, it loses its effectiveness for a long time."

ARMED FORCES:**Atomic Dud**

The Davy Crockett was an Army publicist's dream when first unveiled in January 1961. It had that glamorous name, of course, but then this bazooka-like weapon seemed to have *everything*. It was versatile, and could fire either conventional shells or melon-shaped nuclear warheads from either a jeep mount or a tripod. Highly mobile, it placed the deterrent power of the A-bomb at the fingertips of front-line GI's.

Defense officials moved on the double to deploy Davy Crocketts onto the potential battlelines of Europe. In December 1961 they were assigned to NATO field divisions in Germany. This made everybody feel more secure, especially the Germans.

Then the Army began to notice limitations in the Davy Crockett. It was costly to maintain, and it couldn't shoot very far, either (about 2 miles), so had to be right at the front lines—where it was foolhardy to stockpile nuclear ammunition.

In view of vulnerability, the Defense



U.S. Army

The Davy Crockett: Quietly dropped

Department quietly stopped all Davy Crockett production two years ago, then, even more quietly, Defense officials decided that they would have to withdraw existing Davy Crocketts from Germany. The trouble was, this might make the Germans nervous.

When the story got out last week, Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara got stomping mad. "It's just wild, dammit, just wild," he said of The Chicago Tribune's story. Defense Department publicists said the account was "without foundation." In some details it was indeed in error. But the main point of the story was supported by the transcript of Secretary McNamara's recent testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee. Pertinent excerpts were also published last week, including a question by South Carolina Sen. Strom Thurmond and an answer by McNamara.

Q. How about the Davy Crockett?

A. Davy Crockett is now deployed. We are not producing any more. We proposed to retain it in the service until some other suitable piece is available to replace it.

Late last week, Pentagon acknowledged they had a suitable replacement piece already deployed—a 155-mm. howitzer with a range of eight to ten miles and a larger atomic bang to boot.

Under the circumstances, the Davy Crockett was no longer a publicist's dream. In fact, diplomatically as well as militarily, it now seemed an unqualified dud.

NEW YORK:

Dropout?

For the first two weeks of New York's torrid mayoralty campaign, voters speculated whether Republican John Lindsay could beat Robert Wagner. Suddenly at the weekend the speculation changed; now they wondered whether he would ever *meet* Wagner at the polls.

The mayor, abruptly and quite unexpectedly, let it be known that he may not run at all. "I find I can't spend as much time as a father should with his boys," said Wagner, a widower for the past fifteen months, to The New York Times. "I feel that I must be both a father and a mother." And he added: "When I take on a job, I want to be certain I can do it. This will be four more years, and I am wondering how much it would tax my energy."

The announcement stunned New York political leaders. First to react were Liberal Party chiefs Timothy Costello and Alex Rose, whose party contributed 211,175 votes to Wagner's 401,730 margin of victory in 1961. The Liberal Party's representation on a Lindsay Fu-

sion ticket would materially help offset the 3-1 Democratic advantage in New York City, and Costello and Rose promptly announced: "Should Mayor Wagner be out of the race, the Liberal Party will give serious consideration to Fusion . . . The Liberal Party sees no other Democrat who equals Mayor Wagner. Therefore Fusion possibilities will be wide open."

Candidate Lindsay showed only controlled surprise at the weekend developments. "I hope that I'm going to be running on a Fusion ticket," he said. "Until I hear otherwise, I assume the mayor is running too."

Feuding: Democrats showed only controlled confusion. "It's incredible at this really late hour," said the Kings



Wagner: Pressure builds

County leader Stanley Steingut, who has been warring with Wagner for years. Sen. Robert Kennedy was non-committal. So was the White House. If the mayor retires, the senator would move right into the power breach, during the divisive shambles in the feuding Democratic Party. That's generally conceded to be the last thing the White House wants. Indeed, some New York observers expect Wagner quickly to come under intensive White House pressure to stay in the race "for the good of the party."

Under the circumstances, Wagner's were the most avidly analyzed political words in New York since his own last announcement that he might not run for re-election—shortly after he had

changed his mind and won a third term. Was the mayor understandably tired of the burdens of what he has often called "the most demanding job next to the Presidency," and pining for closer family life? Would he really relish the political oblivion that would follow his sudden withdrawal or was it all only another characteristic ploy by one of the most successful of politicians?

Strain: To cynical observers, Wagner's sudden hesitancy seemed inconstant, especially in view of his statement, Jan. 31, that he "most likely" would run again. Certainly the conditions he mentioned last week were operative last February. Then as now, his boys were beyond the tenderest years of childhood (Robert III is 21 and may spend the next year studying abroad, and Duncan, 18, is a boarding-school student in Maine). Then as now, he could call upon the experience of a dozen years in City Hall to estimate the strains of the future. Indeed the only significant new factor in the past four months has been the emergence of Lindsay as a potent opponent.

But whether the mayor's statement meant exactly what it said—or had its own involved ramifications—one thing was clear to most political observers last week. The net result would be prompt and heavy pressure on Robert Wagner to run for re-election.

CALIFORNIA:

Will He Size Up?

As a budding actor, Ronald Reagan wanted more than anything to play the "Gipper" in the Knute Rockne story, but the producer said no, Ronnie did not size up. Then Ronnie had a very important idea: "Not very many fellows look like football players without the suit," he thought, "and most do in the suit." So Ronnie got some pictures of himself in a football suit and slapped them on the producer's desk. "I was smart enough to keep my mouth shut," he says in a new autobiography,* "and let the photographs talk." Result: within days somebody was telling Ronnie, "Get into the football suit."

Now a budding politician, Reagan wants more than anything to be governor of California. Does he size up? Can he pull a George Murphy—and parlay Hollywood fame into high office? Will his liberal past (as a Democrat, he supported Helen Gahagan Douglas in 1950) help him—or hurt? Can he win the Republican primary with the conservative GOP image he developed later in the eight years he logged as a peripatetic propagandist (up to fourteen speeches a day against "government

*"Where's the Rest of Me?" 316 pages. Duell, Sloan and Pearce. \$5.95.